

- Implement new admission standards over the next two years, beginning in the fall of 2005. NKU will no longer admit students who stand very little chance of succeeding at the university. University administration is currently meeting with area P-12 leaders to make sure high schools have time to prepare for these new standards.
- Create the new NKU Academy, which will provide a five-week summer program for incoming freshmen with deficiencies in their academic preparation.
- Develop strategies to promote the new admission standards, launch new advertising initiatives, and support new scholarships.

Western Kentucky University

CPE Key Indicators of Progress

WKU met its performance goals for:

- Undergraduate enrollment, which increased from 15,234 in 2002 to 15,798 in 2003.
- Graduate enrollment, which increased from 2,584 in 2002 to 2,593 in 2003.
- The number of community and technical college transfers to Western, which despite decreasing from 319 in 2002 to 296 in 2003, remained above the goal.
- The six-year graduation rate of bachelor's degree students, which increased from 41.0 percent in 2002 to 43.4 percent in 2003.
- Several benchmarks in the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement: First-year students scored WKU higher than predicted on the following two benchmarks—*student interactions with faculty members* and *enriching educational experiences*. Seniors scored WKU higher than predicted on *enriching educational experiences*.

WKU did not meet its performance goals for:

- The retention rate of first-time freshmen, which decreased from 78.5 percent in 2002 to 77.6 percent in 2003.
- Several benchmarks in the 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement: First-year students scored WKU lower than predicted on *level of academic challenge*, *active and collaborative learning*, and *supportive campus environ-*

ment. Seniors scored WKU lower than predicted on four of the five benchmarks.

The 2003 National Survey of Student Engagement also revealed:

- Twenty-one percent of first-year students and 43 percent of seniors participated in a community-based project as part of a regular course.
- Thirty percent of first-year students and 41 percent of seniors participated in volunteer work outside of class.
- Thirty-three percent of first-year students and 36 percent of seniors reported that their college experience aided their knowledge, skills, and personal development in contributing to the welfare of their community.
- Twenty percent of first-year students and 24 percent of seniors reported that their experiences at WKU contributed to the development of their voting behavior.

For the purposes of the *Kentucky Plan for Equal Opportunities*:

- In 2002-03, WKU showed continuous progress on five of eight objectives and fell short on one by only a few students, qualifying for quantitative eligibility status (i.e., new degree programs had to be implemented under the waiver provisions during 2004). Performance for 2003-04 will not be available until January 2005.

Additional Institutional Measures

WKU tracks additional indicators of progress toward HB 1 goals, the most significant of which are:

- A fully articulated and integrated strategic planning process that includes online departmental action plans, as well as an annual planning report measuring progress on 77 major performance indicators.
- Graduating Student Surveys (both undergraduate and graduate) that gauge graduates' satisfaction levels with academic programs and student support services and facilities.
- The University Assessment Program that assures all academic programs and administrative and educational support services are regularly and systematically assessed in terms of demonstrable outcomes and program improvements. This comprehensive assessment project is under the

direction of a university assessment coordinator and a university assessment committee. Assessment plans, data, results, and use of results to improve programs and services are available online for all units.

- The Academic Program Review process that provides for a systematic and ongoing review of academic programs by a peer faculty committee, with the goal of ensuring high quality in all WKU programs. Western's fully articulated review process and criteria have been adapted by several other universities in Kentucky.
- Local versions of student engagement surveys that focus on specific departments and programs.
- Results on the teacher certification exam and ratings on Kentucky's Quality Performance Index Report. In 2003-04, WKU graduates scored 93 percent on PRAXIS II, and WKU received an overall rating of good on the Quality Performance Index Report (QPI). In 2002-03, Western graduates scored 99 percent on PRAXIS II, and WKU received an overall rating of excellent on the QPI.

Programs of Distinction

WKU has two programs of distinction supported by the Council's Regional University Excellence Trust Fund—the School of Journalism and Broadcasting's Center for 21st Century Media and the Applied Research and Technical Program of the Ogden College of Science and Engineering.

The Center for 21st Century Media consistently earns high national rankings and recognition. Highlights from 2003-04 include:

- The School of Journalism and Broadcasting was reaccruited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication.
- The Public Relations program was certified by the Public Relations Society of America, becoming the only PR program in Kentucky to have dual recognition.
- The School of Journalism and Broadcasting finished in fourth place overall in the national Hearst competition.
- For the seventh consecutive year, WKU won the best TV newscast in Kentucky competition of the Associated Press.
- Western finished in 10th place nationally in broadcasting.
- In the Region Five Mark of Excellence competition of the Society of Professional Journalists, the WKU NewsChannel 12 won first in the television non-daily newscast telecast one to three times a week.

- WWHR-FM student radio station was one of four finalists in the 2003 Collegiate Broadcasters Inc. National Student Production Awards in the category of Best Promo for Station or Student Media Outlet.
- The WKU Photojournalism program won the William Randolph Hearst Foundation Intercollegiate Photojournalism Competition for the 14th time in 16 years.
- WKU photojournalism students received 15 awards in the 58th College Photographer of the Year competition, more than any other university.
- The School of Journalism and Broadcasting and Nikon Inc. collaborated to host “Emotion,” a sports photojournalism workshop March 5-8, featuring freelance photographers Dave Black, Joe McNally, and Rick Rickman.
- The *College Heights Herald* won the 2003 Gold Crown Award from the Columbia Scholastic Press Association, its fifth in as many years.
- The *College Heights Herald* continued its domination of the Kentucky Intercollegiate Press Association newspaper contest, accumulating the most points by winning 14 first-place, ten second-place, ten third-place, and seven honorable mention awards.
- In the Region Five Mark of Excellence competition of the Society of Professional Journalists, the *College Heights Herald* took first place as best all-around non-daily newspapers published two to three times a week.
- The *College Heights Herald* won the general excellence award in the associate member newspaper division of the Kentucky Press Association.
- The *Herald* advertising staff received eight awards in the Kentucky Press Association’s advertising excellence competition.
- The Western Forensic Program is ranked number one in the nation among all colleges and universities. Western students traveled to 17 different states and one foreign country. Western forensic students were declared International Champions in Madrid, Spain, capturing eight of the 11 International Championships. International Championships were won in Impromptu Speaking, Spanish Literature, Persuasion, Prose Interpretation, Duo Interpretation, After Dinner Speaking, Lincoln Douglas Debate, and Parliamentary Debate. Once again the Western Forensic Team made an unprecedented sweep of all National Collegiate Championships winning both NFA and AFA Nationals. Western also made history by becoming the first school in the history of intercollegiate speech and debate to be repeat national champions at **both** national tournaments. Western students became the first students ever to win both individual events and debate sweeps at the NFA Nationals. Eighty-two universities competed at NFA

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with approximately 2400 entries. AFA had 63 universities with 2800 entries. Western forensic students also competed in and won the Pi Kappa Delta National Tournament held at Middle Tennessee State University. Additionally, Western won the Kentucky Forensic Association Individual Events and Debate titles. Western debaters closed out the debate portion of the tournament in quarters.

The Applied Research and Technical Program (ARTP) engages more than 400 students per year in world-class research opportunities to address societal problems. Major activities include:

- Faculty members in the ARTP were awarded \$7,978,810 in grants, contracts, or appropriations last year. This compares to the previous year's total of \$5,707,643 and more than triples the total of \$2,237,891 for the first year of the POD program (1999). The ARTP has been allocated \$5,272,047 since its inception and has leveraged this investment into \$27,448,550 from federal and private sources.
- The Department of Energy invited a member of the Institute for Combustion Science and Environmental Technology to lead them on a trip to China to bring back a new technology related to coal combustion.
- The Department of Energy has invested over \$3 million in the establishment of a circulating fluidized-bed combustion unit as part of a national consortium (Combustion Technology University Alliance) of 20 universities and 15 corporations. It will be part of the National Energy Technology Laboratory. Construction of the facility has begun.
- The USDA-ARS has established a Manure and Byproducts Utilization location at Bowling Green as a result of collaboration with ARTP Centers. ARTP members were invited to a national meeting in Atlanta to help establish the national research focus in this area of the ARS. They hired two WKU students as technicians for the four research scientists at this location.
- The Biotechnology Center helped train technicians for Sygen, Inc., a biotech company that recently relocated 25 Ph.D. research scientists from Berkeley, California, to Franklin in Simpson County, Kentucky. They hired two WKU students.
- In order to expand the capacity of faculty to involve students in hands-on applied research without taking them out of the classroom, over 41 research associates, post-doctoral fellows, or technicians were hired on grants, contracts, or appropriations.
- The Engineering Services Center has led the effort to recruit more

women into science, engineering, and mathematics. One successful effort was “Girls in Science Day” in which 120+ middle school girls participated in a day of hands-on activities in these areas.

- The ARTP has established numerous research collaborations with the National Park Service at Mammoth Cave National Park, the largest of which is the Maple Springs International Environmental Research and Learning Center, which is currently hiring a director.
- Faculty members of the ARTP have received six Kentucky Science and Engineering Foundation grants to develop innovations and move them toward commercialization. ARTP members have received two phase I SBIR grants and one phase II, with another submitted.
- Center activities have expanded globally. Eleven students in the Center for Biodiversity and the Biotechnology Center worked on wildlife forensics projects in collaboration with the University of Nairobi, Kenya, this past summer in Africa. Several students of the Center for Water Resource Studies worked on a project involving karst areas of China to help improve the living conditions of residents living in a highly polluted environment.

Collaborative Programs and Initiatives

Collaboration with other Kentucky postsecondary institutions and P-12 schools has increased the quality and quantity of Western’s academic offerings. Highlights include:

- WKU actively participates in state literacy partnerships, the study of the implementation of an early reading grant and its effect on student achievement, the Kentucky Adult Education Literacy Institute for instruction and research related to adult literacy, the Kentucky Reading Project, and the Collaborative Center for Literacy Development. Western also partners with local schools and agencies in the Warren County Literacy Task Force.
- Western participates in Kentucky BRIN Phase II, funded through a National Institutes of Health grant, and developed as a collaborative effort of 12 Kentucky institutions. The Kentucky INBRE network focuses on basic science and biomedical research, particularly in the areas of genomics and bioinformatics.
- Western participates in national consortia to advance the quality of teaching and learning in P-12 schools through the SREB’s University Leadership Development Network, a consortium of 12 universities

committed to designing effective and accountable school leadership programs. Western also participates with a group of 11 universities operating under a grant to oversee the Renaissance Teacher Quality Title II Project, which aims at improving teaching quality by holding partners accountable for the impact of teacher graduates on student achievement.

- WKU, along with seven other universities and five federal agencies, is a member of the Southern Appalachian Mountains Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit, which works with federal land management, environmental, and research agencies to provide responsive technical assistance, continuing education, and cost-effective research programs to resource managers. Western also has collaborated with Mammoth Cave National Park to develop an Environmental Learning Center.
- Western's Regional Science Resource Center, housed at the university's community college, collaborates with numerous area school systems, educational institutions, and state agencies to provide active science learning experiences to more than 80 elementary/middle school science teachers and approximately 4,000 elementary and middle school students.
- Western is a partner in the STARBASE project, a consortium of national universities and observatories aimed at involving students, including pre-college teachers and students, in space research opportunities with robotically controlled telescopes, with the ultimate goal of encouraging active scientific research among participants.
- The Green River Regional Education Cooperative (GRREC) serves as a liaison between the university and 30 area school districts. Each year GRREC conducts a needs assessment for teachers and districts and plans the professional development opportunities and other forms of assistance based on the results.
- WKU is one of ten universities in Kentucky that participates collaboratively with the Cabinet for Health and Family Services to provide the Public Child Welfare Certification Program. The goal of this program is to fill the ranks of Child Protection Workers with the most competent and well-trained workers as possible.
- WKU, the University of Louisville, and the University of Kentucky are working with one another and the Cabinet for Health and Family Services on the Credit for Learning Project. This project allows Cabinet employees to earn graduate credit for their educational and training related activities with the Cabinet.
- WKU collaborates with five other Kentucky universities (including the University of Kentucky and the University of Louisville) to form/join the Kentucky Internet 2 consortium at a significantly reduced rate. This pro-

vides a significant opportunity to use the Internet 2 for academic research, teaching, and practical research as well as the capability to access supercomputers, transfer extremely large data files, conduct real-time research collaborations, and conduct full-motion video teaching in an access grid environment.

- WKU public health faculty are collaborating with colleagues from the University of Kentucky and Eastern Kentucky University to evaluate bioterrorism preparedness exercises across the Commonwealth, public health preparedness for bioterrorism events, and emergency medical service personnel knowledge of weapons of mass destruction.
- WKU Area Health Education Center collaborates with the University of Louisville Kent School of Social Work to coordinate the Kentucky Interdisciplinary Community Screening (KICS) project each summer. This is a one-week project that combines education for students in medicine, dentistry, nursing, and social work from the University of Louisville and public health students from WKU to offer health screenings in medically underserved communities.
- WKU is a leading member of two state-based study abroad consortia, the Kentucky Institute for International Studies and the Cooperative Center for Study Abroad, that involve collaboration among all public and many private colleges and universities.

Major Initiatives for Next Year

Western will continue to focus on improving graduation rates, including those of transfer students, and will be extremely aggressive in addressing retention goals. Internal program assessment systems focusing on learning outcomes as the key measures of success will be used to ensure quality and improve programs.

To increase enrollment, graduation, and retention rates, Western will:

- Intensify efforts to recruit more students transferring from KCTCS institutions.
- Continue to monitor WKU students' progress toward graduation and work with students in danger of dropping out through the "Taking Aim" program. Western will include transfer students in the program this year to help them continue their studies and complete their degrees.
- Expand and continue the six-week freshman assessment program that

provides interventions for at-risk students as part of “Strategies to Increase Student Success,” and provide earlier and more aggressive intervention at mid-year for at-risk freshmen.

- Expand the learning communities program, which helps students connect with their university experience in ways that improve learning and increase retention and graduation.
- Promote student engagement, particularly civic engagement, through opportunities such as the American Democracy Project. The WKU Quality Enhancement Plan, developed as part of the current SACS reaffirmation effort, has as its theme “Engaging Students for Success in a Global Society.” This major, forward-looking initiative with a five- to seven-year implementation schedule, will ensure that the WKU campus community is focused on designing, implementing, and rewarding engagement activities at all levels.
- Sponsor a majors’ fair to help students find a major that is right for them.
- Create a Student Success Center within the Downing University Center, which offers a central location and convenient hours for traditional and non-traditional students. Key components of the center will include tutoring, mentoring, advising, computer help lab, programming, and assessment. The Career Planning Services Center also will be moved to a location within the Student Success Center.
- Expand dual enrollment agreements with several area high schools.
- Continue to expand distance learning, primarily web-based courses and programs.
- Continue, and expand if possible, programs aimed at serving at-risk high school students.
- Add 23 new full-time faculty positions and upgrade ten part-time positions to full-time to meet challenges of enrollment growth.

To increase diversity, Western will:

- Continue to emphasize the recruitment of students from target counties, particularly through increasing school visits and creating awareness of financial aid opportunities.
- Increase access to postsecondary education through the expansion of WKU’s community college and its partnership with Bowling Green Technical College.
- Strengthen partnerships with several school systems in GEAR UP and

STLP (Student Technology Learning Program).

- Continue to enhance African Americans' professional advancement in P-12 administrative positions through the Administrative Leadership Institute.
- Create a multicultural city-county directory including business, churches, and events to be distributed during orientation.
- Complete a campus-wide diversity climate survey using an external consultant and using the results to create a more attractive and hospitable environment for diverse faculty, staff, and students.
- Expand professional development opportunities for faculty through the Human Resources Office and Faculty Center for Excellence in Teaching (FaCET).
- Support faculty and staff attendance at national conferences on diversity issues.
- Enhance on-campus communication regarding diversity issues and activities through electronic and print media.
- Initiate a pilot program ("Step Up") for diverse student support to address needs of students who have appeared before the Academic Probation Committee.

To increase research and public service expenditures, Western will:

- Support and enhance economic development opportunities with existing and potential businesses by providing selected credit programs and developing workforce training programs identified to meet specific needs, with emphasis on skill building components.
- Increase the number of grants, contracts, and cooperative agreements in basic and applied research and public service.
- Continue involvement in the Commonwealth of Kentucky's New Economy Strategic Plan, particularly through the WKU Center for Research and Development. With its partners, WKU will be actively engaged in nurturing entrepreneurs and assisting emerging growth companies. High-tech fields where the intellectual capital of the university's faculty can be applied will be emphasized.

Conclusion

Overall, comprehensive universities have made progress in key areas of Goal 4, particularly in enrollment and graduation rates. Last year, only one comprehensive institution met its graduation rate goal; this year, five did. Work is still needed to improve student retention and transfer. Next year, the Council will evaluate the role of the comprehensive universities, including a review of institutional mission statements and performance goals, as part of its strategic planning process. Guidelines will be drafted for the development of campus action plans, which will address how each institution will implement the revised public agenda and HB1 goals. Finally, the statewide transfer committee will ensure several initiatives, like the Course Applicability System and completion degrees, are successfully implemented.